THE MUSIC OF REASON
(A BFB FANFIC)
BY:
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Before We Start....

Heyo!

This is a story I have had in mind for quite some time (in draft for much longer), and now I've finally mustered up the courage to publish it! I'm still REALLY nervous though, so I probably won't update often...

I figured because today is Pi Day for me, this would be the PERFECT day to publish this story! Considering it's about eternal algebra class, which has to do with numbers, hahaha-

Any and all constructive criticism is welcome, and highly recommended! As long as it helps me to become better as a writer.

Now, without further ado, it's time to start! I hope you enjoy this story!

Our Journey Begins

LIY

Shrouded in darkness....abandoned in this foreign, remote, territory.....and isolated from those whom I had known for years....

I couldn't feel anything....

I couldn't move anything....

I couldn't.....REMEMBER....anything....

Not another time there was where I'd felt more distressed....at least, from what I could recall. Never would I ever have expected that trying to accomplish something beneficial...in my team's case, of course...would lead me to this fate. Throughout this, one question, and one question only, haunted me like a ghost would an aged mansion. And that singular, up-most significant question was.....

Why.....?

Why had choosing to change for the greater good strike me right back in the face? Why had nobody acknowledged the hard work I put into the competition, everyone voting me off without even thinking twice? And why....dare I ask.....was I sentenced to endlessly roam this area with absolutely no hope of escape? Still.....despite my luck and unknowing of the situation....I decided to make the best of it.

Figuring that just maintaining one position on the ground wouldn't do me any good, I groaned as I stumbled up from the cold, hard floor which I was lying upon. I slowly rubbed my eyes open, and took a fine glance at my unusual surroundings. There wasn't much to see, though. Everything seemed so.....black, and.....vortex-like, in a way.....

"H-hello..? Is anybody there..?" I called out into the endless space of nothing. "Pencil? Leafy? Bracelety? Anyone....?" My only response was the nearly everlasting echo that followed. Exploring seemed to be my only hope at this point. No longer hesitating, I decided to do just that.

I walked for what seemed like hours, not finding anything just yet. Though I saw no physical objects here, live or inanimate, I DID see something else. If you were to squint your eyes and look hard enough into the pitch, you could almost make out these strange figures in the distance. They almost looked like....numbers.....or maybe letters.....or other symbols of some sort. I had better things to worry about though, so I kept going.

"There really is...nothing here.." I quietly said to myself. "What am I going to- OUCH!" I stumbled backwards, and reorientated myself to see the figure I had apparently bumped into. What stood in front of me, was no more than a lone, wooden sign. "Huh....What does this say....?" I read it aloud to myself. "Welcome. If you are reading this, it means that you have been selected to take part in our extraordinary, educational experience. You are now entering the the first zone of the....wait...WHAT IS THIS?!"

"What is WHAT?" A voice suddenly called from behind me.

"W-who said that??" I quickly spun around to see who it was. "Um....Who are you? Er...WHAT...are you?"

"In all honesty, I should be asking you the same thing. You don't look familiar...." The creature took a good look at me. "Are you new here?"

I hesitated. "Yeah, well.....I...guess so..? Look, I don't know what this is, where I am, or what I'm even doing here in the first place. Can you tell me anything? I could really use a good explanation here."

"Well, to start, my name is Eight." He walked closer to me, so I could get a better look. "If you know who Four is....though, I'm assuming you do because we are inside of him currently....I am a number, just like he is. And I welcome you to.....ETERNAL ALGEBRA CLASS!!"

"Whoa whoa whoa, HOLD UP. Let me just catch up on that real quick..." I stopped to take a breath. "We're...INSIDE Four?? How is that even possible?"

"Four is capable of many things, some of which you may not have even discovered yet. It's a whole other world in here...soon, you'll learn to just except it. I've been living here for about nine years now, so it's all cool."

Shaking a little, I responded, "N-nine y-years.....You been stuck here f-for.....Excuse me, but....is there ANY way to get out of here? A-at all?"

"Oh, of course!" Eight paused. "Though...nobody's ever done it before, it's quite simple, actually. In order to escape, all you need to do is pass this here algebra class!"

"Wait...really? That's it?" Eight nodded in response, and I felt relief flood over me. "Wow, I didn't think it would be so easy! Algebra's not THAT hard; this'll be a breeze!" Eight didn't say anything back. He just stood still. Smiling.

"Ok, let's get this thing started!" I grinned. "Soooo..." I looked around. "Where are the...papers? And pencils? And desks?"

Eight then began to laugh at me hysterically. I paused, not exactly comprehending what was happening. "Ohhhh, you are SO funny!!" He said, trying to catch his breath. "PAPER and DESKS, how hilarious!!"

"Uhh..." I slowly backed away. "I wasn't really....joking. Isn't this supposed to be a classroom? Where you take tests and all that?"

"Not THAT kind of class, silly!" He responded. "Well....not entirely, anyways. You do have a LOT to learn! Here-" He pointed in certain direction. "Just head that way, and you'll eventually get a better understanding of what is happening. THAT'S where you will begin your class!"

"Okay...I'll do that." I took one step before turning back around. "Wait, do I at least get to work with other classmates at all?"

"You sure ask a lot of questions..." Eight pointed out. "But yes, actually! You do! You'll just have to find them, that's all. They've already started!"

"Oh....great." I sighed. "Forget looking for my friends; where the heck am I supposed to find ANYONE in this messed-up place?!"

"LIY, IS THAT YOU?! OH MY TREE IT ISSSSSS-" I heard someone call. It didn't take 2 seconds for me to realize who it was...

Leafy ran right on up to me and gave me a big hug. "HEY, LIY!! I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH!! It's gotten boring staying here seeing the same old things over and over and over again without an end! I'm glad I finally get to see someone new! C'mon now-" She grabbed my hand and started yanking at it vigorously. "Pencil and Bracelety already got going, they didn't want to wait for me, but that's okay! We can catch up! Let's go! Go go go!!"

"Well, looks like you've got yourself a partner already! Lucky you!" Eight smiled. "Now, I'd best be on my way. But remember: If you have ANY questions at all, don't be afraid to *raise your hand and ask*! I'll *always* be here!"

"Okay, I gu- Leafy, STOP THAT!" I turned to whack her hand that was pulling me, and went to look back at Eight again. But....he was just gone. Without a trace. I didn't question it....Just one of those typical things you would see in movies.

"Wow...." I spent a minute taking it all in. "....Ok, we should probably get started now. I've stalled long enough."

"Finally! Let's get moving!" Leafy exclaimed, a huge grin on her face. Together, we walked into the darkness towards our next destination.

Little did I know that this was not only the first step into a long and non-forgetful adventure.....but also towards a new, life-changing light.

Starting Off Strong

LEAFY

Wow! I can't believe I actually found a friend here, especially after so much time being alone! This is going to be great, because now I finally have someone to talk to again! However, does this mean Liy was eliminated? I don't see how that could even be possible! Liy is the greatest, coolest, most interesting, most epic, most outstanding, most thrilling, most amazing, most spectacular, most remarkable, most fantastic, most extraordinary, most wonderful, most miraculous, and most AWESOME person in the entire world!! This terrible outcome for her, along with EVERYONE ELSE that was eliminated, is truly shocking to me.

I turned back to look at her, since I was skipping so far ahead on the path. "So, uh, hey again Liy!" I smiled, trying to start up a conversation. "I'm so sorry you got eliminated....you really didn't deserve it. But hopefully we'll be able to get out of here soon!" There was no response.

Knowing that I wasn't getting anywhere, I tried to think of something different. "I'm...uh...not really sure where Pencil and Bracelety went. They headed out a few weeks back, early in the morning while I was still sleeping. Some friends, am I right? I decided to wait until someone else I knew came along, and I luckily found you! I'm glad you're here with me now!" All Liy did was shrug, and look down at her feet.

I was starting to get annoyed by this lack of interaction. But at the same time, I felt a bit bad for Liy. Was she okay? I wasn't real fond of these almost non-existent answers, and needed to know what was up. I glanced back at her once more.

"Hey....Are you alright? You don't seem well.....I'm not quite sure of the problem, but I'm sure that whatever it is, we can solve it

together! Best buddies always help each other out, and you have to believe that! C'mon, Liy!" I playfully nudged her with my elbow, and put an arm around her.

She looked at me, and gave me a slight smile. "Wow....heh. You're indeed energetic for someone who has been trapped in here by yourself for the past month. And....thanks, by the way. I do believe we can get out of here....somehow. I'm just not feeling that great about being eliminated and all that..."

"Now now, it'll be ok." I attempted to comfort her. "Don't worry about it too much. I know it can be really hard knowing that some people hate you enough to eliminate you, but don't let that demean you! Those people are just cruel, unloving jerks that don't have any feelings! You're still amazing!"

"Yeah.....If only I could believe that." She slowly removed my hand from her shoulder. "I guess I'm feeling a little better, though. Thanks for that, Leafy.."

"No problem at all, Liy! Not a pr-"

"Wait, hold on!" Liy paused me, and started to stare straight ahead on her. Cocking her head to the side, she squinted her eyes and began to walk forward a little. Faster and faster she moved, to the point where I was running to keep up with her.

"Hey..!" I yelled, desperately trying not to lose her. "Please wait up..!! You're going too...." I coughed and wheezed while running until she finally stopped, and I was able to catch my breath. Why didn't she wait for me, like a GOOD friend? That's incredibly rude of her...

"Look over there..." Liy pointed to a small, faint light. She slowly walked towards it, as I followed close behind. We began getting closer to it, and the light slowly got bigger. As soon as we were about as near to it as we could get, Liy carefully reached out her hand, as if she were trying to touch it. I stood back, a little uneasy as to what may happen next. Then....all of the sudden....

The light went out.

The two of us were silent for a good ten seconds afterwards. I looked over to her. "Well.....What do we do now..? Where else are we supposed to go?"

Before Liy had the chance to respond, we heard a loud buzzing noise that shook the ground. Dim lights around this small area, and ONLY around this small area, began to turn on, allowing us to see a little better. We looked around, but there was not much to be found. Then, a giant whiteboard along with a few signs seemed to spring up from the ground, and a metallic, robotic voice could be heard from above us.

"Question One, Ninety-Nine Remaining, First Sector. Adequate responses may proceed. Erroneous responses will be rejected. Complete each challenge to the best of your ability. Each will start off simple, but progressively become more difficult. Your challenge begins now."

When Liy and I glanced back towards the whiteboard, we saw that they was somebody else standing close to it. The creature reminded me a little of X....but yet, it clearly wasn't X. Instead, it was in the shape of the letter "a", and it seemed to be finishing up writing something on the board. It turned to see us staring at it, and quickly ran away.

I faced myself to Liy. "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go check out what it says!"

"Alright, that sounds good." She responded, while smiling.

We walked up to it, and read what was written. Surprisingly enough....It was a math problem of all things. I'm assuming we were supposed to solve it.

"Let's see...umm...." I squinted my eyes, trying to make out what was written. "It's asking forrrr...."

Liy looked at it as well. "Well, it shows the number 784 under a radical sign. So, that must mean that we're looking for the square root of 784. Huh, that's not too hard! The square root of something is just whatever number times itself equals the number under the radical....and I'm pretty sure 784 is a perfect square, too!"

I just stood there, dumbstruck. What did that even mean..? None of the words that came out of her mouth made ANY sense to me at all. Were....they supposed to? I had no idea, so I just nodded and pretended I knew exactly what she was talking about.

Liy looked at me. "So, do you think you know what the answer is?"

I froze up. I'm assuming she knew what the answer was, and I didn't want to make a fool out of myself in front of her! I hesitated a long while. "Uhhhh...." I shook a little bit. "Is it....21?"

She looked at me funny. "Uh....N-no, I don't thinks that's-"

"What about 10?! Is it 10?!" I began to panic. "No no, it's 56!! 87?! 43?! 134?! 659?! 1,398?!"

Liy attempted to stop me. "Leafy, it's not that hard. Do you even know wha-"

"THREE POINT ONE FOUR ONE FIVE NINE TWO SIX FIVE THREE FIVE NINE-"

"IT'S 28, LEAFY!! THE. ANSWER. IS. 28!!!" Liy finally screamed. She was breathing heavily. "You.....You had no idea how to solve that...did you?"

"N-no, it's just...." I tried to think of something to say, but I couldn't. "I wasn't thinking straight, that's all."

"It's.....whatever. At least we found the answer." She wrote it down on the board with the markers we were provided. "Um...what do we do now? How do we advance? H-hello....anyone..? We're uh....We're done with the question. Is anyone going to....check it, or-"

At that moment, as if on cue, a giant, scanner-looking device seemed to lower from the ceiling. A blue beam of light ejected from it, as it scanned over the answer we had written. The light quickly turned to a green color, and I heard some gates open to the right. That must've meant that we could move forward.

"YAAAAY, WE DID IT!!" I yelled, jumping around gleefully.

"Yup, that's right!" Liy added, beaming. "We should get going now. I mean, it said we have 99 more of these to do, so let's not waste any time."

"Wow....That's a lot." I pointed out. Wait, so how many did we have to begin with?? We already did one....and have 99 more...so...that would be....uhhh...."

Liy's smile slowly turned to a frown. I could see the disappointment in her eyes as she slowly face-palmed.

"This...." She slowly sighed. "This is going to be a loooong expedition...."

WHERE'S ICE CUBE?!?!

BRACELETY

"Hey Pencil. Hey Pencil. Hey Pencil. Hey Pencil. Heyyyy Pencil. Pencil. Pencil. Pencil. Pencil. Pencil. Pen-cilll. Pence-Pence. PENNNNCCCCCCIIIII-"

"My GOD BRACELETY WHAT DO YOU WANT???" Pencil finally screamed at me. "Why can't you just shut up for once?!"

I stumbled back a little. "No no, I promise! This time, it's REALLY important! I just needed to ask you something."

"Fine....Go ahead." She sighed.

"Okay.....Uh.....
.....Where's Ice Cube?"

Pencil looked as if she were about to lose it. "You. Just. Asked. Me. That. TEN MINUTES AGO!!! For the final time Bracelety, I don't know! And I don't care either! That's not even what I'm concerned about right now!"

"Well, you SHOULD be concerned about it! Ice Cube is the coolest person EVER! She could get us out of this mess in a jiffy, if only we could find her! Say it with me! Gooooo, ICE CUBE!! Gooooo, ICE CUBE!! Gooooo, ICE CU-"

"Stop it. Just....stop it." Pencil said, covering her face with her hands. "I'm not saying ANYTHING with you. Have you even MET Ice Cube? She's so stupid, she can't do anything! I've known her long enough to confirm that."

WHAT??? I gasped so long and hard at that ridiculous comment. How could she disrespect the one and only beloved Ice Cube?! It

made my heart hurt just thinking about how many people out there are unaware of her true greatness! As Icy's number one fan and admirer, it is MY duty to make sure that NOBODY, and I mean NOBODY, talks trash about her!

"HEY!" I yelled. "NO SHE'S NOT!! HOW DARE YOU SAY-"

I hesitated, as Pencil gave me a stone hard glare and bared her teeth. She slowly made her way over to me, and looked down upon me as her body towered over mine. If I dared to finish this sentence, she would for sure finish me off. It's...not that easy to act tough around Pencil...

"I-I mean, uhh...." Cowering in fear, I searched for something better to say. "I believe t-that Ice C-Cube is a great person. You should too BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO-" I winced as Pencil put a fist up to my face. I don't remember her ever being really physical in the past....but I wasn't taking any chances here.

"Okay.....Are you done now?"

I didn't say anything.

"...Good." Pencil backed away from me, as I got up from the ground. "I can't believe it....Of all the objects in the world I could've gotten stuck with, it had to be with you. I almost wish I had left YOU behind instead of Leafy, since she's slightly less annoying. Honestly, I don't think any object is as obnoxious and idiotic as you."

"Aside from yourself, you mean..." I mumbled under my breath, just quiet enough so Pencil couldn't hear me. When she looked over, I turned away, pretending to be focused on something else.

"Okay. We should probably focus on the task at hand right now. I'm not in the mood to yell anymore at the moment." Pencil turned back to the whiteboard she was originally writing on. "This is only the sixteenth problem, as far as I can recall. We need to do a lot more work before we can get out. C'mon over here and help with this one, I don't want to have to do all the work myself!"

Rolling my eyes, I began to trudge on over to her. I really wasn't

in the mood to do an algebra problem right now though. I was more concerned about ICY!!! I just needed to know where she was, and what she was doing! Why didn't Pencil understand? Why didn't anyone understand?! AHHHHHHH ICE CUBEEEEEEE!!!!

"I GOTTA FIND ICE CUBE!!!" I screamed, and started running around in circles instead of continuing to walk. "ICE CUBE, WHERE ARE YOU!?! CAN YOU HEAR ME???? WE NEED YOU RIGHT NOW!!!! ICYYYY I'MMA GO FIND YOU!!!"

"I...think I've found the answer to this problem." Pencil examined her answer carefully. "Bracelety, can you just come over here and- wait, where are you going???"

It was too late. I had already run off in another direction, desperately searching for my idol. Turning left, right, and all around, I couldn't seem to see her anywhere!! Where could she be?!

"Hmm...." I wondered. "Maybe there's someone else here who can help me find her. Somebody who knows this place better than I do. I just need to find someone.....Hey, you there! Whatever you are!"

What I saw almost reminded me of X. It had a different and weirder shape to it though. It seemed alive, and that was confirmed when I got a look over in my direction.

"Who..? Me?" It pointed at me. "Wait, were you the one who said that?"

I nodded vigorously. "Yup! Hi, I'm Bracelety! I'm looking for Ice Cube! You know....THE Ice Cube. Everybody knows her!"

All I got was a confused expression. So I continued on. "Well, if you haven't met her, you SHOULD. She's so awesome, amazing, and PERFECT in every way! I have never met anybody else with such talent! I need to find her so I can eternally praise her never ending qualities! Do you know where I could find her?"

"Uhhh...." I could tell it was thinking. I've always wanted to try that. "Hey, Fifty-Seven? Can you come over here please?"

"Of course. What is it, H?" The tall number came over to us. Maybe

that one can help me!

"So yeah, um...This little object over here is apparently looking for an...Ice Cube? I'm not really sure what she meansss...."

"Well, did she give you her participant serial number?"

"The...what..?" I asked in confusion. The two just shook their heads.

"She must not know, we'll just have to guess." Fifty-Seven thought for a minute. "Do you think it could've been Participant 16459? That one looked kind of like an ice cube."

"No, definitely not. He disappeared a while back. I'd say either Participant 13298 or 17620."

"What about Participant 11446?"

"Or 12987?"

"No, 14783."

"What are you guys talking about?!" I exclaimed. Neither of them paid me any mind, to my dismay.

H's eyes lit up for a brief second. "Oh! What about that one that just came in recently? The newest one there!"

"You've got to being joking...." Fifty-Seven rolled her eyes in disappointment. "Really? There's no way that could be right. That one was DEFINITELY a light switch-"

"Wait, LIGHT SWITCH?! LIY?!" I jumped back, shocked at this. But my surprise quickly turned into fear when I felt a tall, wooden body slam straight into mine and cause me to crash right into the ground.

"Yeouchh!" I cried in pain, just before receiving a hard slap to the face.

"BRACELETY! WHY THE HECK DID YOU JUST RUN AWAY LIKE THAT?? DO YOU THINK THAT'S OKAY?? DO YOU DO THIS TO EVERYONE?? WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?!"

"Oh uh, h-hi P-Pencil..!" I stuttered. "S-Sorry about that...I was j-just..." There was no way I could say it was because of Icy again though....No way...

"A-Actually, something I think you might like!" Getting up, I began to regain confidence. "I found out Liy was just eliminated. She may be somewhere in this...maze..? Near us nonetheless! Maybe we could find her!"

Pencil quickly switched to the new subject, slightly interested. "Liy...? I never really got the chance to meet her. She seems alright...I suppose. But do you honestly think that after all this time, we should go back to the beginning, just to find her?! Absolutely not. It'll just be a waste of time."

Disappointment rushed through me. "But..." I needed to persuade Pencil somehow. Doing ANYTHING aside from algebra was something I wanted to do! "...Having Liy with us would provide good company, don't you think? She'd be pretty interesting to talk to! And...." I leaned in closer to Pencil. "You would get to talk to someone who isn't as annoying as me."

This was the comment that made her stop and think. I could tell she was definitely intrigued by this. But....would she give in? I waited and waited, more patiently than ever...

....for her final decision.

Double The Trouble

((Okay, so...

BFB 10 happened.

As happy as I was to see what EAC looked like, obviously it doesn't match this storyline at all. I almost wasn't sure if I was going to continue this book, but I eventually decided that I will, just because it seems like people enjoy it.

However, this story will no longer correspond with the actual BFB series. What happens in this will be much different than what we will see in BFB itself, since I already have a plan for what will happen here. I felt it was necessary to let everyone know that.

So, as long as you understand this, and are still okay with reading this despite it no longer trying to stay canon, then feel free to keep reading!))

PENCIL

Well....

Gonna be honest, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to answer here...

Obviously, everyone knows just how much I've grown to despise Bracelety. This is for quite a few reasons. She's always screaming in that annoying, shrill voice of hers, right up in my face! The nearly endless energy and enthusiasm of hers keeps me on my toes constantly, and she never shuts up about that stupid Ice Cube! Who, by the way, is about as useful as a fish out of water. I don't see how Ice Cube could be ANYONE'S idol.

So, having Liy would be somewhat comforting in the aspect of having a sane mind to talk to. But....Do I really want to go all the way back through everything I've accomplished, just to find someone else? It didn't seem worth it....she's not even a real friend of mine. And I just wanted to get out of this place...

Before I could say anything, one final thought crossed my mind.....*My alliance.*

God, how I missed them....If only one of them were here, even to just say hello to, I would feel so much better. And if I had learned that one of them were left behind like Liy, I would 100% be running back to find them. Maybe....Maybe Liy's the closest thing to an alliance member I'll ever find here. We could have a chance at actually getting along if I went back to find her....and I wouldn't feel so alone. I knew what my final choice was going to be.

"...Fine. We can go back to search for her." I stated, looking straight at Bracelety. "But let's make it quick; we have no time to lose!"

"Really?!" Bracelety gasped, a very shocked expression taking over her face. "OH YEAH!! WOOOOO!! NO MORE ALGEBRA FOR RIGHT NOW!! THANK THE ICE CUBE GODDESS FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL FATE!!" She began jumping, dancing, and screaming Ice Cube gibberish very wildly. I let her have the moment....It was probably the only time she was going to get one.

"Yeah, yeah..." I managed to smile a little while saying this, feeling like somewhat of a good person for once. "I'm glad your happy about this. Now, let's get moving!"

She didn't need to be told twice. Eagerly, she bounced right over towards me and surpassed me easily. The grin on her face grew wider with ever step she took.

"Hey, wait up!" I yelled after her, chasing her down in the opposite direction of which we were supposed to be headed. The path was long....much longer than I remember it being. But nothing could ruin the motivation flowing throughout the two of us!

....or at least not for 5 minutes.

It was honestly pretty depressing how fast I got run down like that. Panting from exhaustion, I set myself down for a rest. "This is taking....an awfully long time, Bracelety. Do you even know where we're going...?" Looking around, everything seemed to look the same

as it did before. But then again, EVERYTHING looked the same here! It just didn't feel right to me....Thinking about it made the worry trapped inside of me for so long suddenly start to show.

Bracelety, still smiling, just shrugged it off with passion. "Well, of course not! But it seems right to me!"

I took a shaky breath before continuing. "Well, it doesn't to me....D-Didn't you just follow the way we originally c-came?"

"Ahhhh....about that." She laughed nervously. "See, I THOUGHT about doing that...I really did. But...then my Ice Cube instincts told me that THIS way was the way to go! They never lie!"

"Y-Your....Your 'Ice Cube....instincts'...." I slowly and cautiously placed each of my hands onto Bracelety's shoulders, then quickly yanked her in close. "L-Let me tell you something right now.....Next time your 'Ice Cube instincts' tell you what to do.....TELL THEM TO SHUT THE HELL UP!" My fist took a swift blow into Bracelety's face, and she stumbled back with her hand covering the injury.

"P-Pencil..! W-Why..?!" She cried out. "Why do you do this to me?!"

"BECAUSE YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING, BUT CAUSE TROUBLE! ALL I WANT TO DO IS GET OUT OF THIS DARN PLACE, AND INSTEAD OF USING INFORMATION YOU'VE ATTAINED, YOU TRUST IMAGINARY LITTLE VOICES IN YOUR HEAD?! THEY'RE NOT EVEN REAL!!"

"I...g-guess so..." Bracelety refused to look at me any longer. Then, for some reason, her face lit up. "Hey, look over there! It's another one of those math station things!"

I immediately went to check if she was right. Sure enough, it looked exactly the same as one of the other places we had been to before. I was able to breathe a sigh of relief. "Good....That means we're at least on the right path."

When we reached the area, we had to patiently wait for one of the questions to show up. I was a little aggravated at the fact that we

had to answer more math questions just to get back, but I guess it was alright. It was strange though...since we were on the other side of the gate. It seemed to look nearly the exact same as it did when we originally started on the first side.

"Question Fifteen. Eighty-Five Remaining. First Sector." We heard the robotic voice speak to us again. Then, just like before, a question was quickly scribbled onto the board for us to answer. The two of us took a good look at it.

"Oh, I remember this! It's the same question we originally had here." I swiftly picked up a marker and began writing. "Find the value of x in the following equation: 12x - 13 = 131. How did we do this..? Add 13 to both sides...divide each side by 12.....Oh right, the answer was 12! I'll just write that down here andddd....Done!"

I waited and leaned myself up against a nearby wall as the machine scanned my answer, anticipating the opening of the gate. Except....it never happened. Instead, a neon green light in the shape of a bar emitted at the top of the gate, with a darkened bar directly beside it, and we were given ANOTHER math problem to solve in a similar format to the last one.

My face changed to an expression of utter shock and confusion instantaneously. "Okay....WHAT is going on here?" I turned to Bracelety for answers, but she seemed to be in just as much disbelief as I was. "..We have to solve ANOTHER question?! But we already solved the one necessary to proceed through!"

"Ehhhhh....not really though." A voice called to us. I didn't even bother to see who it was, but according to what the voice sounded like, it was probably another one of those stupid variables.

"HIII!!" Bracelety called out. "Who are you, and where do you all keep coming from?"

"That is for us to know, and for you to never figure out. Anyways, I've showed up just to solely answer your question and move on." The variable, which looked like the letter "d" from the corner of my eye, stepped closer to us. "Y'see....When your traveling BACKWARDS through this test....you must do double the work you did before.

Hence, the reason you're now getting two questions instead of one. We figured it was most fair that way."

"...In what way is that fair?!?!" I cried out in distress. "If anything, we should have to do LESS work!!" It was too late....the variable was already gone. I've officially had it up to this point.

"You know what, screw it. Bracelety, we're NOT doing this! I REFUSE TO DO MORE WORK THAN I HAVE TO!!"

Bracelety flinched, and covered her face with her hands. "PLEASE DON'T HURT ME AGAIN!"

"No.....I won't hurt you..." I sighed, and started slamming my head against the wall I was leaning on. "WHY. CAN'T. WE. JUST. GE-ohMYGOD!" The wall collapsed without warning, and I would've fell completely forward onto the ground if it hadn't been for Bracelety catching me at the last second. We took a minute to re stabilize ourselves, then peeked at the new pathway presented to us.

"Huh....What could this be?" The place seemed to be completely covered with fog, and we could hardly see a thing. "Can we go this way? Why would they have it blocked off like that?"

"Maybe it's a secret entrance!!" Bracelety chimed in with the upmost enthusiasm and adventurous spirit. "We should INVESTIGATE!! I bet that's what Ice Cube would have done!!"

I groaned at this thought of this, as we would probably get even more lost than before. However, we really didn't have any better options at this point, so what did we have to lose.

"Alright...." I sighed. "Whatever. Let's go."

We took only a few steps into it, and it was already impossible to see much of anything. This was a bad idea...I could feel it already. I just needed to convince Bracelety the same thing.

"Actually, Bracelety..." I started. "I think I changed my mi-"

I never got to finish this sentence. The wall that seemed to have broken down was suddenly and efficiently reconstructed, blocking off

our only exit. Our foggy vision was turned to an entirety of pitch black. Nothing could be seen anymore, and curiosity changed straight into fear.

We were officially trapped.